

# Shipwreck!

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



The shipwrecks of the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore area are nearly as well known as the rock formations that give the area its name. Rock cliffs dominate much of the shoreline, but the shore marks the boundary between two very different environments, the land and the underwater world.

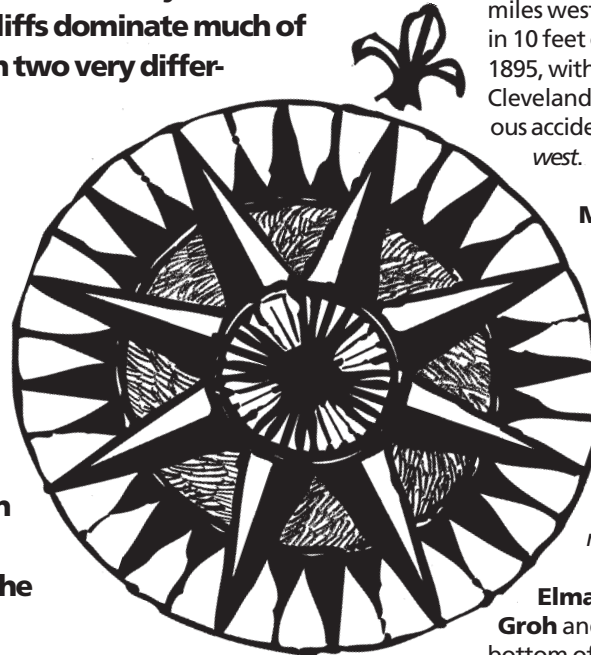
The underwater resources of the Lakeshore are valuable because they are so representative of a wide range of vessels. They have also been relatively well preserved because they have been spared the human pressures of population and industry. It is the undisturbed quality of the park's shipwrecks that has focused the attention of historians and sport divers here, and ultimately has resulted in creation by the State of Michigan the Alger Underwater Preserve to ensure their further preservation and enjoyment. The following wreck descriptions are sequential from west to east and include wrecks outside the boundaries of the park.

**Bermuda** - The 150 foot wooden canal schooner is located in 20 feet of water in Grand Island's Murray Bay. Shipwreck research has proven her actual name, yet she is still known locally as the **Dreadnaught, Arnold, or Granada**. She was carrying a cargo of 488 tons of iron ore when she sunk in Munising Bay with a loss of three hands on October 15, 1870. She is intact and a prime subject for underwater photographers. (Buoyed)

**Smith Moore** - After colliding with the **James Pickands** the 230 foot wooden steam barge sank July 13, 1889, as it was being towed in by the **M.M. Drake**. The most dramatic and well known wreck in the preserve, it rests just off Sand Point in about 95 feet of water with her deck at the 85 foot level. She is the most intact wreck in the area, offering experienced divers many hours of underwater exploration. (Buoyed) Loran 31642.2 - 47442.2

**Herman Hettler** - This wreck includes interesting timbers, rudder, anchor and chains, valves and other items, at an average depth of 25 feet. The 210 foot wooden steamer sank after piling up on the Trout Point reef during a snowstorm on November 23, 1926. The cargo of 1,100 tons of edible salt was lost. A few years later her remains were dynamited because they represented a navigational hazard. (Buoyed) Loran 31632.2 - 47431.4

**Manhattan** - After striking Grand Island, the 252 foot wooden hulled freighter sank October 26, 1903, after burning to the waterline in a freak accidental fire in the cabins. Her hull is largely intact with scattered timbers and the huge rudder. She rests on a rocky shelf in about 20 feet of water, protected by the island. (Buoyed) Loran 31648.3 - 47438.1



**Michael Groh** - A mile northeast of Sand Point and 3 miles west of Miners Castle are two sections of wreckage in 10 feet of water. Prior to wrecking on November 22, 1895, with 325,000 board feet of lumber bound for Cleveland, the steam barge had been involved in numerous accidents. Location: 46 27'70" north and 86 75'87" west.

**Mary M. Scott** - Also known as the **Sandpiper**, this 100 foot long wreck is the bottom of a schooner that was laden with iron ore from Marquette. The canal schooner went ashore November 2, 1870. She was named for the wife of one of her owners. The ship was 138 feet long, 26 feet wide, with a depth of 11 feet and weighed 361 tons. The wreck lies approximately 500 feet off the Sand Point channel buoy in about 15 feet of water amid constantly shifting sand. Location: 46 27'54" north and 86 36'37" west.

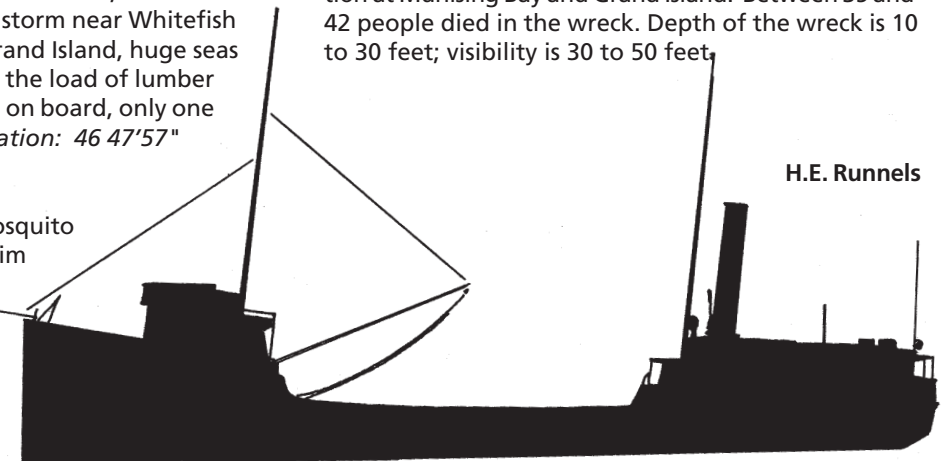
**Elma** - The **Elma** lies in 8 feet of water east of the **Groh** and about 2 miles from Miners Castle. The entire bottom of this schooner barge is often visible among shifting sand. She wrecked on September 26, 1895. Towed as a consort by the **Birckhead**, the 160 foot long **Elma** broke loose in a storm near Whitefish Point. Seeking refuge at Grand Island, huge seas broke away the rudder and the load of lumber washed overboard. Of nine on board, only one casualty was recorded. Location: 46 47'57" north and 86 35'53" west.

**George** - Located near Mosquito Beach, the ship was the victim of a typical fall gale. She was loaded with 1,330 tons of coal en route to Marquette when she ran into an intense snowstorm. Lying in 15 feet of

water at the mouth of a cove, about 120 feet of the hull is visible. All eight crewmen and one woman survived by rowing a yawl to Grand Island after the 200 foot ship had its sails ripped off by the wind and ran aground on October 24, 1893. Loran 31604.5 - 47430.6

**Wabash** - At Chapel Beach lies the remains of the schooner **Wabash**, broken and scattered with its cargo. Towed by the powerful tug **Samson**, the **Wabash** was among a consort trying to make it to Grand Island in a raging snowstorm on November 15, 1883, when she ran aground. Crew members were rescued by the **Samson**. The **Wabash** and its cargo were a total loss.

**Superior** - One of the most tragic of the Pictured Rocks accidents was the loss of this steamboat at Spray Falls on October 29, 1856. The 191 foot long side wheeler had two decks, the upper one entirely for passengers. In heavy seas, she lurched off course. Attempts to lighten the load were unsuccessful and as she took on water the boiler fires were extinguished. Foundering on the rocks, passengers were washed overboard and had to swim in frigid water to the rocks. Survivors endured wind, cold, and snow, struggling several miles to the nearest habitation at Munising Bay and Grand Island. Between 35 and 42 people died in the wreck. Depth of the wreck is 10 to 30 feet; visibility is 30 to 50 feet.



H.E. Runnels

**Kiowa** - Off Twelvemile Beach in about 40 feet of water lies the steel remains of the ocean going steamer **Kiowa**, a World War I “laker.” About 80% of the ship’s hull and most of the machinery may still be seen at the site, though all of the superstructure is gone. The **Kiowa** was one of 498 ships of the “Frederickstad Design” built between 1917 and 1920. Heading down lake with a cargo of flax seed, it was caught in a gale and began taking on water. By December 1, 1929, she was helpless and fetched up in 30 feet of water before a strong northwest wind. *Loran 31499.8 and 47425.1*

**Mary Jarecki** - The first wreck east of Twelvemile Beach is this wooden bulk freight steamer, victim of a July 4, 1883, stranding. The ship, heavily laden with iron ore, ran off its course and ground ashore in fog off the mouth of Hurricane River. Today, the remains may still be seen resting on the bare sandstone bottom just outside the breakers near the trail to the lighthouse. The long oak keelsons, studded with iron treenails, are just above water. No lives were lost in the incident.

**Oneida Chief** - This was a two masted wooden schooner of 127 feet length and 252 gross tons. Slightly smaller than the “canallers” **Bermuda**, **Mary M. Scott**, **Elma**, and **Wabash**, it was built to trade through the Welland Canal. Hauling pig iron downbound, it wrecked at Au Sable Point on May 31, 1868, in heavy seas. Little of the **Chief** wreckage has been located.



Kiowa

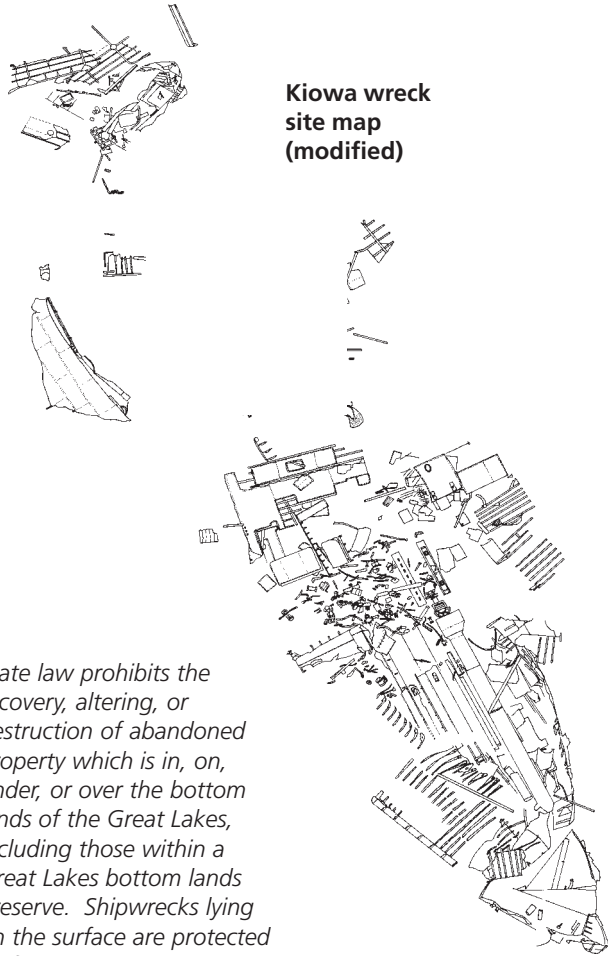
**Sitka and Gale Staples** - The bones of the **Sitka** and **Gale Staples** are mingled at Au Sable Point. The two craft were much alike - both were double decked wooden bulk freighters. Each had two masts and were 272 and 277 feet in length, built in 1887 and 1888. The **Sitka** stranded on October 4, 1904, in heavy fog and high winds. Downbound and loaded with iron ore, the ship ran aground, filled with water and was abandoned in heavy seas. Lifesavers from Grand Marais rescued 17 men from the ship.

The **Gale Staples** was upbound on October 1, 1918, laden with coal for Port Arthur. Driven by high winds, she veered off course and grounded on the reef. All hands were eventually rescued. Pieces of these two ships can be seen on the beach just west of the Au Sable Light Station. Numerous other pieces of these wrecks are lying on the reef in shallow water.

**Union** - Another ship lost on the reef is the steam barge **Union**, though little of its history is known. It made four trips to Marquette in 1873 before its demise. On September 25 it was running down the lake carrying 432 tons of ore for the Elk Rapids Iron Co. when it ran into a northeasterly fall storm. The location of the wreck is still a mystery.

**South Shore** - This small passenger and freight steamer was disabled in a November 23, 1912 storm. It lies off the Grand Sable Dunes about five miles east of Grand

Marais. During a heavy blow, Captain Ora Endress kept her off shore, waiting to enter the harbor. She later filled with water, and in large waves the life saving crew rescued all 10 passengers and crew. The ship and her 75 ton cargo were a total loss. The boiler is easily found, and the hull appears from time to time in the shifting sand near Log Slide.



*State law prohibits the recovery, altering, or destruction of abandoned property which is in, on, under, or over the bottom lands of the Great Lakes, including those within a Great Lakes bottom lands preserve. Shipwrecks lying on the surface are protected by federal law. Please leave these remnants of the past for others to enjoy.*

**Nirvana and Galatea** - These two wooden barges were lost just west of the piers at Grand Marais on October 20, 1905. Towed in consort by the **L.L. Barth**, they were caught by a 65 mile an hour gale. Running for the harbor, the towline broke as they tried to steer into the narrow, tricky channel. After striking the pier, the two ships ended up on the beach, losing their total cargoes of \$30,000. All remnants of these wrecks are buried in sand.

**H.E. Runnels** - The steam barge **Runnels** was lost on the pier at Grand Marais during a November 13, 1919, storm. Hauling a load of coal to Lake Linden, the weather turned sour and the captain tried to negotiate the narrow channel to the bay. As the **Runnels** tried to back into the waves, the steering gear failed. Life savers from the nearby station performed an amazing rescue of the 13 member crew. Seven gold life saving medals, including two to local fishermen, were awarded for the daring rescue. The wreck lies broken and scattered, buried deep in the sand.

**Saveland** - Another wreck in the Grand Marais area is the schooner **Saveland** just outside the old pile dike at the east end of the harbor. She was a three masted schooner principally employed as a tow barge in the coal and ore business. On October 22, 1903, she was driven into the dike after separating from her consort string in a heavy storm. Her load of some 800,000 board feet of pine was a total loss. Portions of the wreck and the pile dike are occasionally uncovered in the sand 3/4 mile east of the pier.

**Manhattan** - The early screw steamer was a passenger ship that now lies inside the harbor at Grand Marais and is not to be confused with the later bulk freighter wrecked at Sand Point. It ended up on the bottom, right in the middle of the channel on September 2, 1859. She had a fascinating and colorful career having sunk and raised three times previously! The wreckage today lies east of the current channel in about 15 - 20 feet of water.

**Hunter** - The second significant wreck within the Grand Marais harbor is the freight packet Hunter, which burned there on October 4, 1904. Built as an ocean going fish tug, Booth and Co. brought her to Lake Superior to haul fish and passengers. While lying in harbor, the ship burned to the water.